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Ballads and Lyrics

BY
ELDREDGE DENISON



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ELDRIDGE DENISON.

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MANHATTAN

A NARROW window underneath the eaves,
Where never touch of sunlight comes, nor moon
May shine to mix the magic of the night,
But where, across that little patch of sky,
Sometimes a white cloud smiles, or, in the dark
Between the chimney-tops, can gleam a star.
And there, night after night, one sits and stares.
Up from the depth below is heard the shout
Of children dancing in the street to some
Late organ's tune, the call of neighbor wives,
The laugh of passing women; and he sees
The arc's false moonlight lie along the wall.
The asphalt smell, hot, heavy, holds the air,
And comes the dull, recurrent sound of trains
Upon the pillared track. He, city-lured,
Has seen mirages pass; and it is still
A narrow window underneath the eaves,
Where, weary with vain quests, he sits and
stares.

The odor of the town is now the breath
Of June across the fields of hay; the sound
Of voices, those who turn the windrow back;
And the commingled rumble of the trains,
The humming of innumerable bees.
Again it is sweet summer-time at home —
And oh, the orchard walk, the little lane, and
she!

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in Heaven.

O God, Thy Heaven is so far away
And this poor earth so very sadly near,
That, in their misery, men cease to pray,
In doubt that Thou canst any longer hear.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy temples, shell torn, lift their sightless eyes ;
The land is all a bloody, trampled sod ;
Across the sun the gluttoned buzzard flies ;
Where men have battled in the name of God.

*Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth
as it is in Heaven.*

The world has waited many hundred years
Its coming, and the weary world waits on ;
Thy children cry, with choking sobs and tears,
“ O Lord, our God, when shall Thy will be
done? ”

Give us this day our daily bread.

Men halt the hand of Plenty on the seas,
And bar the gate, while Hunger stalks within ;
The outstretched hands of those on bended
knees
Are empty, that Starvation help to win.

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive
those who trespass against us.*

And shall we then no more forgiveness find
Than that we show the butchers of our own?
Must we appeal to the Eternal Mind,
Not to the Love a Father's heart made
known?

And lead us not into temptation.

'Tis those who urge a right divine to reign,
Who lead the hosts of death. What they
have done
In heaping all the stricken land with slain,
Is claimed as work for brothers of Thy Son.

But deliver us from evil.

Thy ministers have blest the battle-flags,
The guns that hunger for the "cannon's
food,"
The fields where far the bloody war-line drags;
Have prayed "Success," that Thou mightst
find it good.

For Thine is the kingdom.

And yet, Lord God, we must believe — we
will —
That, somewhere, far beyond the greeds, and
hates,

And snarling covetousness of men, there still
A blessed land of promise surely waits.

And the power, and the glory.

Thy power is peace ; Thy glory, peace ; Thy law
Is peace. We have Thy solemn word
That they whose might and will it is to draw
The sword, shall surely perish by the sword.

Amen.

To those who strive and die that right may live ;
Who wage no willing war, armed to defend ;
Who of their own the best and dearest give
To aid Thy cause, grant courage to the end.
That out of this red blaze of war may rise
A better earth, that fire has purified ;
That by the blood of every man who dies
To serve, his sons be nobler than he died ;
That aching eyes, drained of their final tears,
May see the dawning of Thy day again.
If, then, the world may rest through coming
years,
That blood, those tears, have not been shed
in vain.

AMEN !

WINTER MAGIC

DESOLATION in the garden

Where the royal roses grew ;
Where the crackling seed-pods harden
In their film of frozen dew ;
Where the cedar-tree stands warden
Of the little path we knew ;

Where the wind comes up and, sighing
With a voice of throbbing pain,
Whispers through dead branches, dying
When the long night comes again,
And the sleeted grass is lying
Like a swath of silver grain.

But the hearth fire bright is burning
And the kettle starts to sing,
And the mystery we're learning
That there is a magic thing
With the wand of fancy turning
Winter's evening into spring.

And again we walk together
Where the softer breezes blow,
Side by side, and wonder whether
Other hearts can ever know
Of love's garden, where June weather
Always bids the roses grow !

THE GARDEN GATE

DOROTHY, I must relate,
Kissed him through the garden gate.
And the peonies were quite
Charmed by such a pretty sight,
And they nodded, as to say,
“Come again to-morrow day!”
And this little maid of two
Seemed to know just what to do;
When he tried to hesitate —
Kissed him through the garden gate!

Now, once more, a happy fate
Brings them to the garden gate.
He is tall, and she is fair;
And the peonies, nodding there,
Turn in wonder, as to say,
“Surely ’twas but yesterday!”
And this maid of twenty-two
Knows exactly what to do;
Seems — just seems — to hesitate
As he leans across the gate!

SIR ROBERT GRANTLEY'S HORSE

The author understands that this was an actual occurrence, and that the horse belonged to Sir Richard Gillespie of the British Army.

THE drums have rolled, the martial band
A stirring march has played,
And now the "Fortieth" all stand
As though on dress parade.

Yet that were nothing new to tell —
That were a thing of course;
But this is why they come — to sell
Sir Robert Grantley's horse.

The horse that bore him through the fray
When every rank was thinned;
When many a strong man tried to pray,
And then forgot he sinned

To curse aloud when, through the fight,
He saw the noble brown
Plunge in his gallop to the right —
"Great God! the colonel's down!"

The angry bullet pierced his side —
How small a thing can kill!
As if he knew his master died,
The rearing horse stood still.

The hand, all twisted in the rein,
Grew limp with death's chill damp;
The horse he should not mount again
Could drag him back to camp.

Though rich in honor, poor in gold
Sir Robert Grantley died,
And what he had must now be sold —
There's little else beside

For widowed wife and orphan boy
In England far away;
It's bitter grief that kills the joy
Of victory to-day.

And so the drums rolled, and the band
A stirring march has played;
And now the "Fortieth" all stand
As though on dress parade,

Until across the open space
They lead, with kindly force,
Into his old, accustomed place,
Sir Robert Grantley's horse.

He does not seem to feel at ease,
He lifts his head and ear,
As if to ask, "Why, if you please,
Is not Sir Robert here?"

And then, as though the voice he knew
Had whispered a command,
He quiets, as he used to do
In good Sir Robert's hand.

There's not a speck upon the coat
The trappings hang about,
Save one dark spot the soldiers note,
Yet would not have washed out.

For every man who did not know,
Has heard it where he stood —
The spot that strangely dark doth show
Is brave Sir Robert's blood.

"How much is bid?" the seller cries;
"A hundred pounds I'll take
To start the horse that some one buys
For Grantley's widow's sake!"

"*Two hundred!*" is a captain's shout;
It is a bid indeed,
Worthy the man who called it out,
Worthy the noble steed.

"*Two hundred ten!*" the Major cries.
"*Two hundred thirty!*" Then
By twenties on, the bids still rise
And reach "*Three hundred ten!*"

“ ‘ *Three hundred twenty* ’ do you say?
A ‘ *thirty* ’? Are you done?
You know you’re buying here to-day
For Grantley’s wife and son! ”

Then the Lieutenant-Colonel cries
“ *Three hundred fifty!* ” when
A common soldier meet his eyes
As, from among the men,

He steps, with hand raised to his head
And eyes upon the ground,
And, with a ringing voice, is said,
“ *We give four ’under’d pound!* ”

Then sounds the “ Going! — going! — *gone!* ”
The horse is led amid
The ranks ; among the others none
Will raise the privates’ bid.

The band plays loud, as play it ought,
The officers, perforce,
Have cheered the soldiers who have bought
Their loved commander’s horse.

For, from his scanty store, each one
Has brought his share to pay
The sum that, counted up, has done
To take the prize to-day.

.

The drums roll loud, the bugles shout,
A stirring march is played
Each time the "Fortieth" turn out,
At home, on dress parade.

And when he hears the bugle-call,
There marches, as of course,
In his old place, among them all,
Sir Robert Grantley's horse.

SONG FOR A JUNE BABY

Do you hear the elf-bells ringing
When you look so far away?
Can you hear the fairies singing
Songs they sang some earlier day?

What star shone to guide you hither
When you came at love's command?
Do you wonder "whence and whither"?
Little guest from Summerland.

June gave you her gift of roses,
Smiling fields, and sunny skies;
And each waking morn discloses
Some new wonder to your eyes.

Springs shall come, and hopes will thrill you;
Autumns sad must have their part;
But no Winter's cold can chill you —
Born with Summer in your heart.

TO ———

'Twas at a ball. In vain I tried
To feel less like a social martyr,
When, lying on the floor, I spied
A thing of yellow silk, a ———!

I put a dash there, for 'tis said
To write it plainly out amiss is;
Yet England's motto may be read
Upon just such a thing as this is.

I stooped, and hid it in my hand,
And wondered who might be the loser.
She could not ask me for the band!
How such a question would confuse her!

Returning with it to my place,
I wondered if my cheek were flushing;
In turn I scanned each lovely face,
Until I saw how you were blushing!

My own perception I had wronged —
To think that I would not have known her
To whom this dainty band belonged;
No one but you could be the owner.

So thus I send it back to you,
Around this bunch of blushing roses!
One found it whom you never knew;
Whose name no hint of mine discloses.

I would not have you guess 'twas I,
For that might put constraint upon you.
Perhaps you'll know me by-and-by;
Perhaps you'll love me! When I've won you

I'll whisper that 'twas I who found
This clinging silken band of yellow.
We're strangers, still I will be bound,
You, and no other, have its fellow!

And now may my respect for you
Plead pardon for these rhyming fancies;
For never motto was more true
Than "Honi soit qui mal y pense" is!

MY FRIEND

HE was my friend. He understood
All the vagaries of my mood.
Say I was joyous, he was gay;
If sad, he felt the selfsame way.
He held, with trusty commonsense,
All that I told, in confidence.
He died. And now I look around,
But such a friend is seldom found.
I miss his kindly presence, yet
A dog like that is hard to get!

ALFALFA

Plow the furrow wide and deep,
Run it true and turn it fair,
Far across the sloping sweep,
As the loam rolls from the share,
Polishing the mold-board bright
Till it glistens in the light.

Follow quickly with the harrow ;
Crush the clods, and fine the soil,
While the unturned strip grows narrow
As the sweating horses toil.
Harrow quickly, lest it harden ;
Fine the soil as for a garden.

Sow the seed, and let it slumber
Warmed by sun and blessed by rain,
Till the days, in stated number,
Waken it to life again.
Then unfolds before our eyes
One of nature's mysteries.

On the slope where first was showing
Just a shimmering haze of green,
Day by day the shoots are growing
Till no sign of soil is seen ;
And the beauty is revealed
Of a June alfalfa field.

Thicker grown than meadow grasses,
Firm and fixed it seems to be,
But when morning's swift wind passes,
It's a restless, moving sea.
Wave on wave its fellow follows
Toward the upland from the hollows.

When the keen knives cut it down
Hope of further yield seems vain
From a spot so bare and brown,—
Then it greens and grows again.
Thrice and four times thus it keeps
Its first promise ere it sleeps.

“ JOE’S ANNIE ”

THERE’S a cottage half in shadow
Of a great horse-chestnut tree,
Where the road runs from the meadow
To the Welstead Colliery.

Where an evening lamp is burning,
And has burned a year, they say,
That “ Joe’s Annie,” on returning,
May have light to find her way.

Joe can’t tell you what bereft him
Of his simple, trusting mind,
On the night she went, and left him
Just a scribbled word behind;

But his face is strained with longing
As he tramps the mine-town streets,
Where the nightly crowd is thronging,
Whispering to those he meets,

With a voice that is uncanny,
So insistent on reply,
Asking, “ Hav’ you seen m’ Annie —
Hav’ you seen her goin’ by? ”

And the lights are rude and flaring,
There is clatter from the halls,
As the crowd goes on, uncaring
For the one who trips, and falls;

For it's dance, and song, and never
Mind the price, nor who's to pay,
As the glasses clink, and ever
Sounds the laugh that's ghastly gay.

And among the wanton many
Who give love the laughing lie,
May he never see his Annie —
Never see her “ goin' by ! ”

SONGS

A CRADLE SONG

Circa 1640

ROCK-A-BYE, Babie! In y^e tree toppe
Y^e wynd is a-singing, y^e birdies doe hoppe;
And in y^e cool shayde, in y^e cradle doth lye
Y^e childe who doth drowse to y^e soft lullabye.
Rock-a-bye, Babie! In y^e tree toppe
Y^e wynd will keepe singinge when Mother doth
stoppe!

A SLUMBER SONG

1850

Hush-a-by! Rock-a-by! Lullaby-dear!
It's time for the pillow, the sandman is here.
The night-lamp is burning to ward off alarms
While Mother sways gently her babe in her
arms;
His little head lying so warm on her breast,
She rocks him, and sings him, and loves him
to rest.

AN ENAMELED-CRIB SONG

1916

In his little crib tucked tight,
Put out the electric light.

Does he laugh or does he weep,
Left alone he goes to sleep.
Modern mothers all agree
Better for a babe to be
Unrocked, unsung to, just fixed right,
Then one kiss, and a "Good-night!"

THE PARTITION OF THE EARTH

“Die Theilung der Erde.”—SCHILLER, 1789

“Now take the world!” cried Jove, from his
high heaven,
To mortals. “Take it for your own to be.
’Tis thus for an eternal heirloom given;
As brothers share in harmony.”

Then hastened each himself to pleasure,
And young and old bestirred themselves as
well;
The Farmer seized upon the harvest’s treasure;
The Squire’s horn sounded through the dell;

The Merchant sent his warehouse many a
cargo;
The Abbot chose the choicest vineyard’s
wine;
The King laid on each bridge and street em-
bargo
And said, “The tenth of all is mine!”

Quite late, when all at last had been divided,
The Poet came from distant wandering.
Alas! the choice was everywhere decided,
An owner found for everything.

“Now woe is me! Shall I, the rest befriended,
Forgotten go — I thy most faithful son?”
Thus he complained; and, as his cry ascended,
He threw himself before Jove’s throne.

“If thou afar in dreamland have been biding,”
Replied the god, “thou needst not rail at
me.

Where wert thou when they were the world
dividing?”

“I was,” the Poet said, “with thee!

“Mine eyes upon thy shining face were turning;
Mine ears filled with thy heaven’s harmony;
Forgive the soul that, with thy glory burning,
Entranced, the earthly lost, through thee!”

“What’s to be done?” cried Jove. “The
world’s all given;

The harvest, chase, the mart, no longer mine.
But if thou’lt come and dwell with me in heaven,
As often as thou com’st, it shall be thine!”

TO THE FARMERS OF AMERICA

*Whose skin the wind has roughened;
Whose hands are stained with soil;
Whose thews the task has toughened —
To you, the Lords of Toil!*

You have plowed, and you have seeded;
What you reaped, your hands have sown;
Hoarding not what others needed,
When you sold, it was your own.

Though you never piled up riches,
Yours was what the miser craves;
Though you delved in fields and ditches,
You have dug no rivals' graves.

There are those who dwell in splendor;
There are those who pass in pride;
Whose soft hands are white and tender,—
But for you, these same had died.

While they strove for wealth and pleasure.
Toward the false-light onward whirled,
You have held the greatest treasure,
In the storehouse of the world.

And your harvest ripened faster
Than the crop that greed has grown;
Now the one who served is master
And has come into his own.

His the learning of the sages ;
His the science of the soil ;
His the heritage of ages ;
His the honor-rank of toil.

And the ones who did reject him,
Laughing idly in his face,
Now have learned they must respect him,
And accord him worth and place.

And the world that lately doubted,
Comes at last to understand
That the men who can't be flouted
Are the ones who farm the land.

*Whose skin the wind has roughened ;
Whose hands are stained with soil ;
Whose throes the task has toughened —
To you, the Lords of Toil!*

THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN

THE little old woman crept down the dark
street,
Crept down to the street where the lights
were gay;
The journey was long for the weary feet,
So she stopped for a moment on Broadway.
She saw the throng of the theatre crowd
From taxi, sedan, and from limousine;
The pretty young girl, and the matron proud,
The jewels, and the furs, and the silken sheen.
And the little old woman said, said she:
“Shure an’ those are not for the likes o’ me!”

The little old woman went on to where
A window was blooming, a dream of June;
She saw how a rose of Killarney there
Was lying alone, a flowering tune.
She prest up close to the barrier glass
And half way reached with her old, worn
hand,
But the guardian pane would not let her pass
Into that blossoming wonderland.
And the little old woman sighed, sighed she:
“Shure an’ that is not for the likes o’ me!”

The little old woman passed over the way,
She heard the clang of the ambulance bell,

And whispering voices that seemed to say

How one had been struck by a wheel, and fell.
Then she rode along on the tires of air;

Now the room is still, and the nurse is kind;
The roses are nodding a greeting there,

And the sun shines in through the slatted
blind.

And the little old woman smiles, smiles she:

“Sure an’ this is grand for the likes o’ me!”

BERRY TIME

It is in the merry time —
Summer-time and berry time.
Two hands fill the pail, and linger
As a finger touches finger,
As the fairer cheek, a-blush,
Answers now his deeper flush.
Summer-time and berry time;
Such a joyous, merry time!

As they homeward walk along,
Walk along and talk along,
She, with downcast eyes, is paying
Happy heed to what he's saying,
Two hands swinging, bold and free,
Two that must imprisoned be,
As they slowly walk along —
Walk along and talk along.

Ah! it is a merry time —
Summer-time and berry time.
Just before the two have parted
At the white gate where they started,
From his lips the berry stain
Brings the red to hers again.
Summer-time and berry time,
Such a happy, merry time.

SAPPHO

Supposed to have been suggested by a statue

THUS, on Leucadia's brink, was Sappho placed.
Her fair, white arms and fairer, whiter
 breast,
Freed from the garment fallen to the waist,
 Showed purely thus; so one small hand was
 prest
Upon the swelling bosom; thus her eyes,
 Filled with despair where love had lately
 shone,
Turned sadly toward the sympathetic skies.
 Thus Sappho came alone.

And even thus her tiny, sandaled feet
 Touched lightly on the headland's dizzy
 height;
The lovely lips smiled thus, so sadly sweet;
 The trembling limbs were eager to take flight;
Thus, as the robe did further from her slip,
 Was she, whom thou hast made to live in
 stone,
Beheld by those who sailed the passing ship.
 Thus Sappho stood alone.

'Twas thus she paused; the waters smiled below
 A welcome to the one who longed for rest.
No more the joys of Lesbos should she know,

Where love, now false to her, was once con-
fest.

The thought is madness. Memory, which calls,

Is powerless now to hold, since love is gone.

Like a white cloud from off the cliff she falls.

Thus Sappho died alone.

THE CROSS ROAD

THE journey's far to reach a star,
But worth while when you've won it;
The best of earth is little worth
If one must rest upon it.
And, after all, to risk a fall
Is better than to fear it,
For we prize most what has the cost
Of effort to endear it.
“ *Ad astra* ” is the sign to show
The traveler the way to go.

Now Heaven's way seems long to-day,
And side paths are alluring;
With song and smile us to beguile
From what we are enduring.
But lest we trip and make a slip,
We'll heed how we begin it,
For one can ride to Hell inside
Of just about a minute!
And “ *Facilis descensus* ” is
A danger sign we should not miss.

EN ROUTE

I'LL sing you a song of love, my lass,
As the train goes rushing on;
The sun is low on the hills we pass
For the day is almost done.
I'm happy to reckon just one day less
As that cuts the time in two —
For a couple of days are long, my Bess,
To weary away from you.

I'll sing you a song of the heart, my dear,
Of the heart that is fain for you,
That leaps with joy as the time draws near,
With a beat that is strong and true;
And all it is saying is "Bess, my Bess!"
The dearest of names I know,
As I ride along in the fast express
That never seemed half so slow!

NIGHT AND MORNING

WHEN the sun is sinking low,
When the West is all aglow,
And the stars are ready out to peep;
When the wind's ahush, and still
All the sounds the day hours fill —
Then it's time for birds and babes to go to sleep!

When the sun is rising bright;
When the East is all alight,
And the happy day is just about to break;
When the breezes dance along,
And the birds begin their song —
Then it's time for little babies, too, to wake!

MEMORY

THE crowded street I walk along
At noontime of the busy day;
Alone, unnoticed in the throng,
I take my way.

Of all the passing ones who go
Their ways, I heed not one;
They're naught to me, I only know
That she is gone.

Then in my quiet room, at night,
I half dream in my easy chair,
With eyes closed to the shaded light —
And she comes there.

Comes like the fragrance of a flower;
And all we knew of joy and pain
Together, in that silent hour
I live again.

EIGHTY

Just lead me once more to the gate, boy;
Come, lend me the strength of your arm;
The days have grown shorter of late, boy,
But the sun is still pleasant and warm.

I want to look over the cattle;
To see the new mare in her stall;
To hear the old pump's noisy rattle —
I'd like one more sight of it all.

The farm's changed since I was a lad, boy;
New ways and queer notions galore;
At first it was strange, but I'm glad, boy,
That the old way's not ours any more.

There's another new silo! How many
Are needed to keep in the game?
Well, of all the old things hardly any
But the sky and the hills are the same!

That's a fine cow! A "thirty-two pounder"?
A daughter of Aaggie, you say?
I saved her grandam when we found her
Barbwired in the pasture that day.

And she was Nell Pietertje's daughter,
Whose "twenty pounds" then wasn't bad;
I remember when you and I bought her,
The first pure-bred Holstein we had.

So that's the new mare! Well, I guess, boy,
You made no mistake there, of course.
She'll do it in thirty or less, boy,
Or I am no judge of a horse.

"In twenty!" Let's move on a bit, now.
That's a great bull you've there in the stall;
The young things are looking quite fit now,
Do you think you will show 'em this fall?

I guess I will have to go back, boy —
"Boy!"— and you're most fifty-five!
I'm on the home-stretch of the track, boy,
While you're just beginning to drive.

Well, keep a tight rein on your luck, boy;
Drive free, and the pace will not tire;
Like me — why I'm keeping up pluck, boy,
For I'm only a length from the wire!

What's that? Why you seem to feel sorry
That I think the end is in sight;
Well, I guess that you don't need worry
When I know that everything's right!

Why, there is no call to be sad, boy;
Just look at the thing straight and fair;
Now's the time for me to be glad, boy;
It's great to have lived — and lived square!

MY HOPE

WHAT lies beyond the farthest hill
When slowly sinks the final sun?
What hope shall linger with me still
When those last moments run?

I know not where my soul shall go,
Nor what the spirit-quest may be,
But this will be my hope — to know
That you may go with me.

THE MODEL

SHE gave the world her loveliness,
She gave it of her grace;
Through her the artist could express
The charm of form and face.

And now she lives in chiseled stone;
On many a canvas rare;
For though her breathing self is gone,
Her beauty still is there.

The sculptor's immortality,
The painter's lasting fame,
Grow brighter as the years pass by —
But no one knows her name.

LULLABY

MOTHERS sing it, soft and low,
As 'twas sung long years ago,
With a smile, and with a sigh,
Crooning, "Lul-lul-lullaby!"

In the hut, when want and care
Wait beside the mother there,
She would soothe the wistful cry
With her "Lul-lul-lullaby!"

In the home where love is young,
Softly to the babe is sung,
As the rose-light leaves the sky,
That low "Lul-lul-lullaby!"

In the mother-heart, though years
From her eyes have dried the tears,
Sings, as evening's hour draws nigh,
Still a "Lul-lul-lullaby!"

HER GARDEN

THIS was her dearest walk last year. Her
hands

Set all the tiny plants, and tenderly
Pressed firm the unfamiliar soil; and she
It was who watered them at evening time.
She loved them; and I too, because of her.
And now another June has come, while I
Am walking in the shadow, sad, alone.
Yet when I reach the rose-path that was hers,
And breathe the fragrancy of bud and bloom,
She stands beside; the murmur of the leaves,
The well remembered rustle of her gown,
And low her whisper comes, "My dear! My
dear!"

This is her garden. Only she and I —
But always we — may walk its hallowed ways;
And all the thoughts she planted in my heart,
Sunned with her smile, and chastened with her
tears,
Again have blossomed — love's perennials.

THE NEUTRAL

THERE was a fine young Irishman,
Well known as a high liver,
Who dwelt in Castle Ballygan
Hard by the Shannon River.

He spent his days with horse and hounds,
Or shooting some good cover ;
Would play all night for twenty pounds,
And was a famous lover.

Until, one day, he found that he
From all his wealth had parted,
And, save his clothes, had come to be
As bare as when he started.

His creditors swooped down in pairs
And brought the place up standing,
With a couple of mortgagees downstairs
And a bailiff on each landing.

“ Well now,” said he, “ ’tis time for me
To leave, while none’s the wiser ! ”
So he sought a sub-lieutenancy
In the army of the Kaiser.

For forty years he served, and we
May know what progress made he,
When in that time he came to be
“ General Baron von Grady ! ”

He never saw a real war,
For other nations fought 'em,
Yet had won medal, cross and star
At manœuvres in the autumn.

Still had war come, by any chance,
The great machine, perfected,
Had made the Kaiser "King of France"—
Or at least 'twas so suspected!

He sat, one evening, in his tent,
Well tired with mimic slaying;
The band of some near regiment
On the parade was playing.

When through the strains of "Wacht am
Rhein"
And "Deutschland" there came stealing,
"Come Back to Erin," low and fine,
With melody appealing.

"Begad!" said he, "I'm tired, I fear,
Of sound of sword and cannon,
I know I'd far prefer to hear
The lapping of the Shannon!"

Next day he did what evening taught—
Sent in his resignation,
And when the acceptance came, it brought
Another decoration!

Then home to Ireland straight he ran,
And landed on a Sunday,
To find that Castle Ballygan
Was up for sale on Monday.

The ancestral acres back he bought —
(There were some sixty of 'em),
And two retainers next he sought,
With Michael Dwyer above 'em.

Then chambermaid and serving man
The tarnished trimmings burnished,
And soon was Castle Ballygan
(Ten rooms and attic) furnished.

There, in the evening of his life,
His warrior-soul grew tender,
That ne'er to enemy or wife
Had faltered, "I surrender!"

When, bang! a war was brought about
'Twixt Britain and the Kaiser,
And fearful fights were fiercely fought
On land, in sea, by sky, sir!

Our General was sore perplexed;
He felt the Kaiser couldn't
Be beaten, yet was sadly vexed
If he won when he shouldn't!

“ God knows I scorn an Englishman,
At least enough to spite him,
But, damme! if I ever can
Be really brought to fight him!

“ And every German is a friend
With whom I have been banded;
Sure I can't wish to make an end
Of those I late commanded!

“ While fighting me a man may be
A foe like any other,
But when he's sorely wounded he
Is just a soldier's brother!”

And so the General each month spends,
Though slender still his purse is,
A sum that comfortably sends
Equipment for two nurses.

One serving where “ Die Wacht am Rhein ”
Inspires the military,
The other on the battle-line
Where they sing “ Tipperary.”

It matters little, never fear,
What song the lads have chanted,
The heart of God draws very near
Where the Red Cross is planted.

There is a fine old Irishman,
A quiet, noble liver,
Who dwells in Castle Ballygan,
Hard by the Shannon River.

A SPRING DREAM

WHEN the first plow strikes the furrow
As the day creeps down the hill;
When the rabbit leaves the burrow
And the night-owl's cry is still;
When the pear-tree's bloom is falling
And the bees buzz from the hive;
When the voice of Spring is calling,
Then it's good to be alive!

'Tis the hopeful time of farming,
With the season well begun;
Soon the planted fields lie warming
In the promise of the sun;
Then the tender corn comes peeping
Where you ran the long, straight rows
To the slope where, from its sleeping
Wakened, the alfalfa grows.

Next you see the haymow treasure
Up its rich, sweet scented store;
See the silos take their measure
Till they can't hold any more;
Hear the stabled milch-cows lowing;
Watch the pretty young things thrive —
And your Spring dream leaves you knowing
That it's good to be alive!

THE POET'S STAR

A STAR shone out upon the night
And sent its ray afar;
The poet turned him toward the light
To find his guiding star.

Scarce was he called to heights unknown,
When this thing came about:
The power-house shut the current down —
The poet's star went out!

LIFE AND DEATH

'TWAS in that strange and neutral land that lies
'Twixt sleep and waking, when the soul of man
Is, for a moment, not of earth, I saw
And lived the things that I shall set down here.
Now those who will may call it but a dream,
A fevered phantasy of restless mind,
But some, perchance, may read it otherwise.
I, for myself, have naught to say of it,
For some things bear not reason, only faith,
And cannot be explained, or set at rest
By any subtle argument of mind.
I only know that it was real to me.

Dying I lay! I who had lived, and breathed,
And laughed, and loved; and all so easily.
Fixed was my frame, as though already dead,
Bound hand and foot by some strange power-
lessness;
Unconscious — so the watchers said — but still
I heard and saw, and knew the things that
passed
About me; and I felt that then my soul,
Which for so long had tired of worldly strife,
Was seeking to escape the mortal. Pain
Was no longer with me, for a numbness crept
Upon my fettered limbs; the heart's light beat
Was softly slower as the breath grew faint.
No fear was on me, and no dread of what

The unknown held in keeping, for at rest
The mind was waiting for the soul's release,
For death is easy, living 'tis that's hard!

And then I heard a voice, that cried "Come
forth!"

Straightway I stood unnoticed there among
All those who gathered at the couch whereon
Was lying that which they had known for me;
That should be wept that day; the morrow
mourned;
The third day laid away; and then — forgot?

Then soon they passed out from the dead man's
room,

And left me there with it. How strange it was,
Thus to regard with curiosity
What, for so many years, had seemed myself —
That dull, cold, waxen thing, that senseless
shape,

On which corruption even then had laid
A shadow.

Then, as thus I thought, I saw
How there, on either side, a figure stood,
Such as I, surely, had not seen before.

And she upon the right was wondrous fair,
Of gentle presence, with her slender form
Robed in the changing colors of the dawn
Made stable; and all garnitured with gems.

Her shining hair, crowned with the sunlight, fell
A shower of golden gleams from head to waist,
And from her very being seemed to glow
A radiance that was a part of her ;
While on her face, turned full to mine, there was
A look of tender gladness, such as I,
Who truly have known little of such looks,
Had rarely seen, save in the lovely eyes
Of one who is no more of earth — of her
Whose going hence had made me long to go.

But she upon the left was sorrowful,
And very pale, a figure tall and gaunt ;
A hungry shape, gowned all in sombre black,
Sad, rusty garments, tattered here and there,
And patched with many a piece. The dusty
feet,
Toil worn and bruised, were sandaled unlike ;
The eyes were sunken ; hollow were the cheeks,
And on the brow were lined the memories
Of troubled thoughts.

So, silently, they stood —
Those strange, contrasted watchers by the dead.
Then to the fair one on the right, I cried,
“ Farewell, O Life ! ” And to the other said,
“ Death, I am ready. Lead — I follow thee ! ”

And smiled the black-robed figure on the left,
A smile of such an untold weariness.

“O soul, hast thou still kept the blinded eyes
Of earth? Look on these sad and tattered
robes —

This poor, patched vesture; on this brow of
care;

These bruised feet, that toiled along the way
With such uneven footsteps; one was shod
Too lightly, and the other weighted down,
So that they often stumbled. Soul, look here
Upon this haggard countenance, whereon
Grief, pain and sorrow; strivings, broken hopes;
All these — and more — through sad, gone
years have lined

The chart that tells man's course, when done.
Behold!”

And here she swept the garment from her breast,
And there, within the shrunken bosom, glowed
A rosy shape of pure and holy light —

“The Heart of Hope,” she said, “The only
thing

Of mine that is enduring. I am Life!”

Then turned I to the other. She too smiled —
A smile like morning on the hills of Spring.

“O soul immortal, I am Death!”

And straight

Away I turned from Life, and followed her.

And whither? That, alas! I cannot tell.
Here ends the vision — or the prophecy.

YOU AND I

WE strolled through many a shady way
That summer afternoon ;
We watched the sun, at close of day,
Yield to the harvest moon ;
We saw her light along the lake
Shimmer, and fade from sight,
Nor marked her going, for love's sake
Had made the darkness bright.
With none to hear and none to see,
The wide world held just you and me.

We walk along the busy street,
Unmindful of the crowd ;
We do not see the ones we meet
Nor hear the rumble loud
Of passing train and noisy van,
Nor voice of any one,
For we, as only lovers can,
Believe ourselves alone.
And so we are, because, you see,
The wide world holds just you and me !

THE STAR

EVERY time a child is born
'Tween the sunset and the morn,
A new star is hung on high,
By the angels, in the sky,
That will ever shine the same
Just to mark the path he came ;
Till the hour when it shall show
Him the way that he shall go.
So, some pleasant night, just try
To find your own star in the sky.
Millions shine for babies born
'Tween the sunset and the morn ;
And among them, fixed and true,
One is shining just for you !

LOVE'S TRINITY

I LOVE three women. "Dangerous!"
You say? Well, that may be;
Yet hardly strange it should be thus,
For each of them loves me.

One has a gentle, pensive face;
One laughing lips and eyes;
One looks at me with just a trace
Of wonder and surprise.

One aids me in my work and thought;
One joins me in my play;
While to the third I've always brought
The best that in me lay.

I love the most the one I'm near,
Yet to all three am true;
Believe this, for, you see, my dear,
Each of the three is — You!

GOOD-NIGHT: GOOD-MORNING

GOOD-NIGHT

GENTLE sleep, touch her eyes,
 Bid them slowly close,
Till the light within them lies
 Dreamy in repose.
As her hand upon her breast
Soothes the loving heart's unrest,
May her sleep, untroubled, be
Sweet for one so sweet as she.

GOOD-MORNING

Morning-glow, kiss her eyes,
 Bid them open bright
With the light that never dies,
 Only sleeps at night.
Bring the color to her cheek;
Curve her lips with smiles that speak.
May the day that greets her be
Fair for one so fair as she.

APRIL

WHAT is the loveliest that April brings?

The laughing sun between the passing
showers?

The morning brightness when the robin sings?

The longer day, to count more happy hours?

The earliest blossoms; buds upon the tree?

I love them all; yet, loving all the while,

The loveliest that April brings to me

Is you, dear, and the sunshine of your smile.

For you are April's child. Her moods are
yours;

The shadowing cloud; the dash of swift spent
rain;

The hopefulness that every chill endures;

The tender promise, and the certain gain;

So variable, yet so always true;

Wholly without the dull monotonies

Of natures that reveal us nothing new;

Your heart is April's, your's are April's eyes,

I did not dream your coming; and the day

Of long, gray dreariness was wearied
through;

Until I reached an unexpected way —

And there was April, dear, and there were
you!

Now joy abides forever in my heart,
Where love a song is singing all the while;
And when I come to you, though long apart,
'Tis springtime in the sunshine of your smile.

THE JOURNEY

THE way leads through the hollow
Where the tangled marshlands lie,
Where the haunting shadows follow
And the sunlight seems to fly.
There is lack of solid footing,
There's deception in the grass
Falsely stable in its rooting
In the depth of the morass.

Soon the road lies past the meadow,
Straightaway it runs and clear,
Where the highnoon has no shadow
And the joyous soul no fear;
Where the wanderer goes faring
Blithely on his easy way,
Never fearing, never caring,
That he wastes the sunny day.

Then the path lifts ever steeper
And the weary feet drag slow,
For the dark is growing deeper
And the doubt begins to grow.
As he turns half hopeless eyes on
Distant heavens, starless still,
Comes a glow on the horizon —
It is day beyond the hill!

MOTHER-THOUGHT

DEAR little feet, the path is steep,
The road winds long, the streams run deep;
I cannot guide you far, the task
Is yours; the most that I can ask
Is power to start your steps aright,
Out of the shadow, toward the light.

Dear little feet, don't ever stray
From mother's love too far away.
Though depths lie low, though heights be great,
Ways smooth or rough, keep on! keep straight!
And we shall never be far apart;
Each cross-path leads to mother's heart.

THANKSGIVING

THE year is drawing to its close,
For it is chill November ;
About the house the rude wind blows
Its challenge to December ;
But hearts are light, and faces bright
With all the joy of living,
For everyone who thinks aright
Is happy on " Thanksgiving."

The door is barred against the cold,
The wind's cry drowned in laughter,
And as one merry tale is told,
Another follows after.
For this one day put care away,
It's great to be just living,
And each has some good cause to say,
" I'm thankful!" this " Thanksgiving."

The young, for their bright gift of youth ;
Mid-age for all that's nearest ;
The old, for knowledge of the truth
That memories are dearest.
No pride of race, nor wealth, nor place
Can make this day worth living —
Contentment is the saving grace
That blesses a " Thanksgiving."

THE TURN OF THE ROAD

THEY wandered through the poppy field,
Dreaming the dream of old;
She listened while the tale he told
About love's magic shield.

She was so young, so sweetly fair,
She followed as he led;
Unmarked the sun was setting red,
And soon the dusk was there.

A star shone through the darkling night,
And as its message fell,
He kissed her at the edge of hell —
And turned her to the light.

A SUMMER WALK

THE robin tells me I am late
In getting on my way ;
The house-dog greets me at the gate
To pass the time o' day.

No cloud at all is on the sky
Where, in the young forenoon,
So dim a glance might pass it by,
Hangs faint the morning moon.

I whistle down the village street,
I whistle in the lane ;
The cat-bird, from the meadow-sweet
Calls back to me again.

Then through the pasture to the hill
Where dark the cedars grow,
On, up the stony path, until
The town lies far below.

There is no soul to heed my talk
Nor watch me go along,
And so, upon my morning walk,
I sing aloud my song.

The oriole is swift on wing
As I go passing near ;
He too has found it joy to sing
With just himself to hear.

I care not that no other knows
Of what I sing to-day —
And comes a little breeze, and blows
My little song away!

I whistle through the field and lane,
I whistle up the street;
The dog is at the gate again.
My morning was complete.

UNISON

THE fairest scene is doubly fair
When you are there,
And see it too;
The brightest moon may only rise
When to my eyes
She sends the mystic beams that shine,
Dear heart of mine,
On you;
And morning lacks its clearest light
From you apart;
Joy of my day, dream of my night —
Sweetheart!

THE STORY OF THE STEEPLE

Founded on Fact

THE slender, tapered spire was almost finished ;
The busy men had ceased,
In turn, their toil, but as their count diminished,
The danger was increased.

Until but two were left upon the steeple,
Who wrought at dizzy height
Above the street where stared a crowd of people
In wonder at the sight.

One workman stood with brawny arms extended
Without the window wide,
And looked to be almost in air suspended
Upon the steeple's side.

The other, and at first it seemed the bolder,
Was working overhead,
With feet above the former's steady shoulder,
Fastening the frame with lead.

With skilful hand he poured the melted metal
Where rod and bar were set
Deep in the stone, that when the spire should
settle
They might hold firmly yet.

When by some chance — God knows what was
the matter —

He let the lead o'erflow,
And sent it, with an agonizing spatter,
Upon the man below.

'Tis death to him if that man makes a motion;
Yet who could bear the shock?
But one; and he, with more than man's devotion,
Stands steady as a rock.

He feels the scorching mass upon him, burning
Its way into the bone,
And not an inch of space is left for turning
Upon the sill of stone.

Full on his naked neck it fell; and, clinging,
It holds with clasp of fire;
He dares not throw it off for fear of flinging
His comrade from the spire;

Who, crouching, creeps into the belfry, turning
In time to hold him fast,
Just as the molten metal, deeper burning,
Has seared his soul at last.

'Tis over. And the comrade who, descending,
Bore him down from the place,
Unmindful of the wondering crowd, is bending
Above the pallid face.

Now lift him gently, tender hands, and bear him
Into the Bishop's house.

The roof is honored; doff your hats who near
him —

This hero, in a blouse.

1915 ON THE FARM

No longer goes the pretty maid
 " A milking, sir ! " at morn ;
No more a dozen men are paid
 To cut and bind the corn.

The scythe and sickle both are gone,
 No flail for years been seen,
And even barnyard chores are done
 Quite simply by machine.

A vacuum milker milks the cows ;
 The cream's not left to rise ;
A tractor draws a gang of plows
 On farms of any size.

The hens lay in a patent nest
 That gives each egg a date ;
And everything must stand a test
 For a certificate !

Poor Dobbin's usefulness is past,
 His pace, too slow by far,
For now the farmer-folk ride fast
 In their new motor-car.

And Romance hides her charming face,
 Regretting what has been ;
But ease and comfort rule the place
 That's run by gasolene !

MAD SONG

IN the lonely night I stand
With my heart within my hand.
And I watch it palpitate,
Watch it palpitate and pant
With the love that came too late
To undo the work of fate,
That denied me all I want,
All that life would need to be
Fair as Paradise to me.

Shall I crush it? See! it moves!
Soul, there is a heart that loves!
Look upon it; mark it well.
Soon it will be cast away,
Useless as a tongueless bell,
Joyless as the heart of Hell.
Listen heart, to what I say —
She is all life needs to be
Fair as Paradise to me.

She has torn thee from my breast,
Laid thee in my hand to rest.
Heart that resteth, ne'er again
Shalt thou beat to joy or grief.
Thus I crush thee, might and main!
There! 'tis done! Ah, God, what pain!
Yet the torture brings relief.
Since my love she will not be,
Nothing now is pain to me!

JUST LAUGH .

A MAN who cannot take a joke
Should not permit himself to poke
Fun at his friends' own foibles, lest
There be a come-back to the jest.
And, honestly, we would lose half
The fun without an answering laugh.

AWAKE, AMERICA!

AMERICA! The hour is now

To guard the gates and man the walls,
Nor wait until the war-blasts blow,

Until some foeman's gauntlet falls.
The thunder of the guns, the cry
Of shell across a smoking sky,
May not for long be held afar.

Awake, America!
Arm for defense, not war.

America! Content and right

Bulwark no land against the day
When greed and hate may link with might
And tattered treaties bar no way.

Sleep not until it is too late,
Until war's summons shakes the gate.
Arouse, and bid the day-dream cease.

Awake, America!
Arm for defense, and peace!

POVERTY

WHEN poor, my friends all came to me,
And shunned me never;
Their honest faces shone, and free
Their speech was, ever.

Now I am rich. And when I need
More truth, less honey,
My friends pass by. I'm poor indeed —
I've only money.

THE ONE WOMAN

THERE must be one to be loved, to be clung to ;
One to be worshipped, one to be sung to ;
One to be held in the eyes, in the heart ;
One to be kept from all others apart.

Is it because her rare mind is the rarest ?
Is it because her fair face is the fairest ?
No, for a hundred far wiser might be,
Or fairer ten-fold, and pass on, for all me.

Why is the touch of her hand like a blessing,
Leaving me cold to all others' caressing ?
Why do I know that the reason I write
My best, is the wish to stand well in her sight ?

These are the questions that poets have ever
Asked of themselves but have answered them
never,
Though each of them knows that the soul of his
song
Is the soul of the woman who leads him along.

For there must be one to be loved, to be clung
to ;
One to be worshipped, one to be sung to ;
And the song that he loves is the song that he
brings
To the one whose heart beats to the song that
he sings.

SANCTUARY

WHEN the little limbs are weary,
 Creep to mother's arms, and rest;
When the little heart aches, dearie,
 Cuddle down on mother's breast.

'Tis a comfy place; and, maybe,
 Some day, dear, when you are grown,
In your arms just such a baby,
 Sleepy-tired, will cuddle down.

OLD ST. PAUL'S, NEW YORK,

At Fulton Street

A STREET of busy life, where, all the day,
The hurried thousands throng; some keeping
pace

Well with the crowd, and those who lag behind,
And yet a few who pass and leave the rest.

With nervous step, urged by quick moving
mind,

Each makes his way, on self intent, nor heeds
The scowl, the laugh, the side-glance nor the
tear.

The din of wheels, the clang of chain-swung
iron,

The drumming of the feet upon the walk,
Mingle in constant dissonance, through which
The crowd's dulled voice sends its low overtone.
There, just beyond, a spot whose silences
Hush sense of all intruding sound, and where
The hours, struck on the bell, tell time no more
For those whose names are wearing from the
stones.

The sun, escaped from towering walls, weaves
shade

And shine where still the brown leaves lie;
Where tree and shrub, held in arrested life,
Await the promised coming of the spring.

A way of restlessness: a place of sleep.

And there, between the two, a barrier

Impassable, save through the waiting gate.

BETROTHAL

WE are standing now together just outside the
garden gate.

Shall we open it and enter in, or would you
rather wait?

We can catch a glimpse of sunshine, there is
just a breath of flowers,

And the laughing wind is calling from that un-
known land of ours.

I could never pass the gate alone if I wanted to,
for, see,—

You are holding in your little hand the gar-
den's only key.

'Tis for you to say, "Let's enter!" and it's
yours to whisper, "No!"

For your voice can bid me follow, and your
word can bid me go.

But I'm longing for your answer, for it seems
to me, of late,

That the only place I yearn for is beyond the
garden gate.

I have never seen the garden that I know you
have not seen,

Though it may be you have dreamed, as I, of
what it might have been

If the right one had been waiting here to enter
in with you,

For one alone can't pass the gate that opens
just for two.
But the right one never came to you, and never
came to me
Till the day I found you waiting, and Love
handed us the key
That I could not use without you, and I
wouldn't if I could!
And I guess that I can trust you to do what I
wish you would —
Say you know that I'm the right one; that you
do not need to wait
Any longer; that for us two you unlock the
garden gate.

But it may be you are timid and half fearful to
explore
A place that looks inviting but has unknown
things in store;
For, of course, it is not easy when one does not
really know
How long or short the way may be that one will
have to go.
Perhaps you think the roses may not always be
in bloom;
That the sun may go behind a cloud and leave
the place in gloom;
That the happy breeze that calls us now may
sometime die away;

Well, if that is what you're fearing, why then
all I have to say
Is — you'd better trust the key to me, and I'll
not hesitate
To put my arm around you, and unlock the
garden gate!

FIDELIS

BEFORE the inner palace-gate,
Where came the King, in robes of state
To visit the sweet Queen, Fidelis stood —
The captain of her Guard; and still
And silent he stood there, until
He almost seemed a statue in his hood
Of steel, with shining armor bright,
And silver shield, that caught the light
To shatter it into a shower
Of dancing gleams that mocked the power
Of myriad lights which, in the room,
Half mastered evening's coming gloom.

There, to the great and outer hall,
Came many a soldier clad for war;
And now and then some general,
With honors won on fields afar,
Would pause to wonder how this man,
Fitted to lead some mighty host
Where battle's stream the strongest ran,
Could hold so long such humble post.
And one, who wondered most, once said,
“Why are thy talents great thus lent
To such a task?” With half bowed head
He answered him, “I am content!”

No trumpet tone could call him thence;
No voice of scorn might give offense;

For in his breast stirred naught beside
The love that seemed too strong a tide
To hold within that breast confined.
And yet he spoke not, for he kept
Locked in security of mind
The silent thought that never slept.
And so when others passed him by,
To fight on field or battlement,
For all their gains he had no sigh,
But only said, "I am content!"

Then once she passed his way; and low
Her whisper reached him, and he knew
What he had never guessed till now —
The Queen — his Queen — could love him
too.

Then smiled the world to him, and then
The glory, honors, riches, power,
Which seemed so much to other men,
Were nothing to him from that hour.
For when, with her great woman's-heart,
The Queen, from far above, unbent,
He knew that he was set apart
To serve her; and he was content.

One day the City rose. The King
With soldiery went forth. Alone
Fidelis stood; and many a fling
The passing warriors had thrown

At him who waited there ; but still
He watched, and stirred not from the spot,
Nor bared his eager sword, until,
When blazed the battle fierce and hot,
The gates went down. Then from its sheath
The great sword sprang, with ring that
meant
A welcome to her foes. A breath
Smiled from his lips, “ I am content ! ”

Then at her door he took his place
And turned to see his Queen within,
With light of trust upon her face
That made him eager to begin.
Then flashed the steel ; and, one by one,
Those who had gained the door went down,
While from the shield the light still shone,
Though brighter, clearer, it had grown.
And when, in one short pause of fray,
The Queen still closer to him went,
And near him knelt, as though to pray,
Fidelis whispered, “ I’m content ! ”

And when the King returned, he found
The Queen in safety. At her door
Fidelis lay on reddened ground,
With broken sword ; and there, before,
Those who had sought to enter — dead.
The Queen was kneeling by his side

To pillow in her arms his head;
And so he rested till he died.
Nor King nor courtier heard the voice
That whispered, with its power all spent,
“My queen — my love! This was my
choice —
To die for thee! I am content!”

.

And on the marble of the monument
They raised where they had laid his urn to
rest,
Was graven by the sorrowed Queen's behest,
“FIDELIS.” And beneath, “*I am content.*”

OLD TIMES AND NEW

LONG years ago, before your day or mine,
When verse was poetry and cows were kine;
When kirtled milk-maids waited there to see
“The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea;”
When Mary went “to call the cattle home,”
And “Cusha! cusha!” coaxed them not to
 roam;
When cows had simple names, both short and
 pretty,
Like “Whitefoot,” “Lightfoot,” “Dairy-lass,”
 and “Betty”;
When lads and lassies, ’neath the winking stars,
Whispered their love across the pasture bars;
A poet really had some sort of show
To shine in verse — but that was long ago!

To-day the lowing cow lows in her stall
And does not wind her way afar at all;
Stabled by day, and just turned out at night,
She’s better off than having flies to fight;
Is treated like a lady, not a brute;
Milked by a college man in a white suit,
Watched by another from the station sent
To weigh her milk and test its fat content.
She has a name to drive a poet insane —
“Lieuwkje Mechthilde Aaggie Houwtje
 Wayne!”

While "half the herd" has one that is as bad,
Like "Farmstead Lass De Kol Satiric Lad!"

But if the romance and the poetry
Aren't now in farming as they used to be,
The modern husbandman can truly thank
The change for his nice balance in the bank,
And on a business basis runs the place
Instead of letting it set him the pace.
His house has running water and steam heat,
Electric light and telephone complete,
While better roads, that cut the journey down,
Have put the farm a short half hour from
town,
And, altogether, he and his good wife
Are really getting something out of life.

Yet, in the winter, when the fire is low,
Sometimes we see, where red the embers glow,
The pretty milkmaid tripping down the lane;
The reapers thrust their sickles through the
grain;
The flail, with rhythmic beat, fall on the floor;
The old mill-wheel turn, dripping, 'round once
more;
As, one by one, the old-time pictures rise,
When memory lays soft fingers on our eyes.
But as the last sparks in the ashes fall,
We think of plumbing, lights, steam-heat, and
all

The things with which the " Good Old Times "
weren't blest,
And " Good New Times " then, somehow, seem
the best !

“DEEP RIVER”

Violin Record by Maud Powell

SOFTLY from the wakened strings
Comes the low voice of the river ;
Sad the message that it brings,
While your sweet lips droop and quiver,
From the depths where shadows lie,
Hidden places without sun,
Memories that will not die
While the river still shall run.

Now there sounds a happy strain
Lilting merrily along,
And your smiles have come again
With the joyousness of song.
Hope is what the music sings,
Laughing lips and shining eyes,
Promises of longed-for things,
Of the love that never dies.

Then a wondrous harmony,
Chords that draw us still more near ;
In my arms rest close to me —
It is sweeter thus to hear.
Now our lips have met, and cling ;
Joined our kindred souls as one ;
And our hearts love's song shall sing
While the river still shall run.

FOR ALL TIME

So many hundred years ago we met —
As shown me in a dream the other night,
When that fair scene was opened to my sight —
I do not wonder that you should forget
Our meeting in the long-ago; and yet
I half believe that, if you would, you might
Lure back some memory from far off flight
And read the horoscope that then was set.
For, sometimes, in the look that you have had
When I have gazed deep down in your dear
 eyes,
To read the eternal love that in them lies,
I thought you did remember, and were glad
To know, in spite of all the change that came,
Our star shines on; that love is still the same.

OLD SONGS

(Tableaux vivant)

I

“COMIN’ THRO’ THE RYE”

THE picture tells the reason why
He could not help but kiss her,
As she was coming through the rye,
Hoping he would not miss her.

He saw, with something like relief,
What made his heart grow bolder,
That both her hands held fast the sheaf
Of rye upon her shoulder.

Because, you see, her lips would be
Left thus quite undefended.
Now do you think she guessed that he
Would see, or just pretended?

Then, as the sheaf was tossed away,
He held her hands and told her
The things that lovers always say,
Her head upon his shoulder.

And though with blush and downcast eye,
She warned him not to do it,
He kissed her coming through the rye —
And after she came through it!

II

"COME BACK TO ERIN"

The greatest patriots in the world
The old green isle supplies,
And Erin's banner is unfurled
Next every flag that flies.

When we come here the door is shut
Upon the way we came;
We sing "Come Back to Erin!" but
We stay here just the same!

III

"JUANITA"

Its style is old, this song we sing
For memory's sake to-night;
You might prefer some modern thing,
This may not ring just right.

Yet as you hear the melody,
Old fashioned as it is,
The simple words that used to be
Set to a tune like this,

Down in your heart you will confess
This truth at any rate —
The song that sings love's tenderness
Is never out of date.

IV

“OLD FOLKS AT HOME”

An ancient story, seems to me,
This song is all about ;
The old folks stay at home ; you see
The young folks have gone out.

Now, that's old fashioned, isn't it?
To-day it's different, quite ;
No woman hugs the fire to knit,
No man's home every night.

Now equal rights give to each one
So many things to do,
That growing lonely, left alone,
The hearth-fire goes out too !

V

“THE OLD OAKEN BUCKET”

There are no oaken buckets now —
And mighty little oak ;
The old well-sweep is far too slow,
And so it has “ gone broke.”

We pipe our water in to-day,
We have no time to waste ;
That beats a well for speed — but, say,
We somehow miss the taste !

APRIL'S LADY

SHADE and shine mark April's day ;
Blows the breeze with laugh and sigh ;
Soon the sun shall dry away
Every tear from April's eye.

April's lady, fair and sweet,
Tripping through the meadow grass,
Sees the daisies at her feet
Bend to touch them as they pass.

Symbol-flowers, that rarer be
Than the richest gardens hold,
Petalled with sweet modesty,
And, within, a heart of gold.

HE AND I

HE and I were friends in the old school-days,
When our hearts were young and light;
And then we went on our several ways,
Till I saw him the other night.

We passed, for a meeting was not for us,
For the space was wide between;
I was atop of a Riverside bus,
And he in his limousine.

The traffic had held us beneath the glare
Of the lights on the Avenue,
And as we were halted a moment there,
I saw that his car held two.

A woman — his wife? — was by his side,
And haughty and cold seemed she,
While I was having a heavenly ride
With the girl of my heart by me.

Those two were looking just straight ahead,
And of life they gave no sign,
While we were sitting "up close" instead,
With her little hand in mine.

And I wondered if he, with all his style,
Were as happy and free from care,
As I who could own the world for a while
At the price of a ten cent fare.

TOWARD EVENING

To-DAY I see the face of her,
The gentle, slender grace of her,
 As first I saw her years ago ;
 And I shall ever see her so,
For none can take the place of her.

My heart it is the heart of her,
A living, loving part of her ;
 Or sad or gay her mood is mine,
 Yet all unconscious of design
The wondrous artless art of her.

Her breath it is the breath of me,
The very life, the death of me.
 When it shall languish once for all,
 Its sigh shall be the follow-call
To me, to the glad wraith of me.

My soul it seeks the soul of her.
As years demand their toll of her,
 They bring the welcome hour more near
 When, from my limitations clear,
I'll understand the whole of her.

A RAINY DAY

Love came to my window and tapped on the
pane,

Saying "Let a chap in, it is going to rain!"

Now I was contented to be alone, yet

I just couldn't leave the boy out in the wet.

And so he came in; and he hung up his bow

And his arrows, and sat by my side, don't you
know.

The rain was soon over, and out came the sun,

And the clouds went a-sailing away, one by one.

Then Love took his bow and his arrows, but
sent

A sharp one to hurt me, as onward he went;

And the fire has gone out, and I'm lonely again,

And find myself wishing 'twere going to rain!

BABY'S JOURNEY

I CANNOT tell you where she went —
'Twas in her dreams, you know;
None but a child is ever sent
Where sleeping babies go.

We watch her peaceful slumbering,
And every little while
Is shown us that most lovely thing —
A sleeping baby's smile.

How she comes back no grown-up learns,
Nor whence the path she takes;
Her head upon the pillow turns —
The sleeping baby wakes!

GOOD-NIGHT

GOOD-NIGHT! Though you are far away
And I alone am here,
Somehow the very words I say
Have power to bring you near;

And in the quiet of the place
One happiness I seek —
I close my eyes to see your face,
And almost hear you speak.

Good-night! I breathe a little prayer
Before I go to sleep,
That God may hold you in His care,
His Angels watch may keep

Beside your bed; that sweet repose
Be yours till morning light;
That happy dreams your eyes may close,
And waken them. Good-night!

TO A. S. C.

North Loup, Nebraska

I THANK you for the kindly thought,
The handshake and the smile,
Which to the busy East have brought
Your breezy Western style.

Sing on, and never mind who hears,
The joy is still your own;
What woodland warbler ever fears
Because he sings alone?

Though us unyielding distance parts,
These things to both belong —
The brotherhood of kindred hearts,
The fellowship of song.

LOVE

I LOVE thee not for days, nor years, nor time ;

For there can be no limit to the love

That grows with every heart-beat more sublime,

That lifts the thought of one poor soul above
The level of itself ; that sanctifies

The task of living. Let me take your hand
A moment — so — and look into your eyes.

I cannot speak, but you will understand,
For neither words nor whispers with half
breath

Can tell you how your wondrous love has
blessed ;

But by my life, perhaps, or by my death,

The inexpressible may be expressed.

MORNING SONG

ARISE! Arise! Have you not heard
Glad day's awakening?
Now every little baby-bird
Is learning how to sing.

The morning-breeze, so soft and clear,
A fairy-story tells,
And in the garden you can hear
The Canterbury bells.

The brook runs laughing down the glen;
White clouds go sailing by,
And throw such dancing shadows when
The sun is in the sky;

The humming-bird, on unseen wings,
Seeks honey with the bee —
Come out! There are so many things
For you to hear and see!

LOVE'S CALENDAR

TRUE love lives but a single day —
Yet what is held within it!
A year of time each second's sway,
While sixty make its minute!

Love's year would bring a world to age,
Ten, send a star to slumber;
Love's calendar has but one page,
Which bears a single number.

Though this no lover can gainsay,
He need no trouble borrow;
Love's life is one eternal day,
With one date, no to-morrow.

THE FIRST LESSON

It was not I who silence broke,
My lips no word of love let fall ;
Instead, it was my heart that spoke
To yours, and told you all.

You gave me no replying word,
No blush of check to show a sign,
And yet I knew ; the stillness heard
Your heart respond to mine.

A little while, and you shall learn
The tender words that trust will teach,
And, with fond confidence, will turn
Their sweetness into speech.

FOR JEAN
ON THANKSGIVING DAY

OF course you don't remember,
But I guess the others do,
A day in that November
When the world was new to you.

In the garden you were taken
From, the sweetest babies grow,
And the angels' kisses waken
Them from slumber, don't you know.

They brought you here to Mother,
And they left you in her care;
And she knew that such another
Baby wasn't anywhere!

You had just started living,
And you hadn't any name;
But truly 'twas "Thanksgiving"
When, ten years ago, you came!

LOVE'S MIRACLE

I REACHED a way of ice and snow,
A barren waste, where all had died;
Then summer-winds began to blow,
And flowers along the path to grow,
For you came, walking by my side.

INDEBTEDNESS

You owe me nothing, Life ; I've had
All you could offer, day by day ;
The gay, the sad, the good, the bad,
I've taken as they came my way.

But, Life, I know that I will be
In debt to you when we shall part,
For, full and free, you gave to me
The treasure of a woman's heart.

TO HER

I SEND to you no orchid rare —
Its value were its cost ;
I know that you would never care
For that where price is most.

I do not offer you a rose,
The flower of fond desire ;
Too soon the perfumed petals close,
And fades its heart of fire.

I plucked a lily, stately cold,
But from my hand it slips ;
That were too chill a thing to hold
Its chalice to your lips.

And now I seek, half hid from view,
In this sweet modest spot,
The only flower I'll give to you —
Just a forget-me-not.

SUNSET

THE great, red river rolled its golden flood
Upon the crimsoned waters of the bay,
Where, clinging to a cloud, the tired sun lay,
As hesitant to trust that sea of blood.
While there, upon the rocky shore, I stood,
Awed by the burning funeral-pyre of day,
There passed, swept by the ruddy tide away,
A fair face, staring from a snowy hood.
The glowing light lent color to the cheek
The water pillowed but polluted not;
The lips were parted, as though moved to
 speak;
It seemed that from those open eyes there shot
A glance to bid me follow; as though she
Held still, in death, her old, sweet coquetry.

CONTENTED

LET greater ones their message bring,
For which the world has waited long,
I am contented just to sing
My little song.

Nor care I if, by later art,
The strain too simple seems to be,
I sing it now as in my heart
It sang to me.

And if it tempt a single smile
Or dry a solitary tear,
I shall account it well worth while,
Though few may hear.

THE DEATH OF SUMMER

THERE is dust along the highway,
There's a brownness on the grass;
There's a rattle in the by-way
As the mullein-stalks we pass.
All the meadow-land is hazy,
Dim the hills and far away;
Every living thing seems lazy
With the languor of the day.
And the sumach leaves are lying
Like a dreadful splotch of blood,
On the hill where Summer, dying,
Holds the faded golden-rod
Like a tarnished scepter, clinging
To a glory that is past,
Through the fleeting day now bringing
Her bright reign to end at last.

Once it was they came and gowned her
In a mantle green and gay,
With the sunlight's gold they crowned her,
Strewing roses in her way.
Now she draws her robe about her,
Frayed and stained, and yields the throne,
And the Hours run on without her,
Leaving the poor Queen alone.
For they see where one comes dancing
Through the woodland, wanton fair,

With her eyes of boldness glancing,
With the vine leaves in her hair;
And they hear her tales of wonder,
And they trust her cunning lies,
As she leads them over yonder,
Past the hill where Summer dies.

Now the Days are all a tingle
With the sparkle of the air,
As the grapey odors mingle
With the apple everywhere;
And they take the path she's taken,
And they do as she has done,
Till one morning they awaken
Just to find that she is gone.
Then they hug the sheltered places
And they fear to venture forth,
For the sting is in their faces
And the wind is from the north;
And the snow is roughly shaken
From the storm-cloud, far and wide,
For the King his stand has taken
On the hill where Summer died.

MY STAR

I HAVE no song to sing to-night,
For thought has wandered far ;
My eyes, in darkness, strain their sight
To seek a star.

To seek, through all the empty space
That is about me now,
The lovely brightness of one face,
Of one white brow.

Shine on! Though other happier eyes
Such radiance may see,
The starry way to Paradise
Is kept for me,

Until shall come a kindlier night
The cloud-gates to unbar ;
When I, with nearer, clearer sight,
Shall see my Star !

FIELD FLOWERS

COWSLIPS and clover,
Sent me to-day;
Now May is over,
June on the way.
“Take her kiss, lover!”
Is what they say.

First her lips blessed them,
Sending the kiss;
Then her hands pressed them,
Each as it is.
I have confessed them —
They told me this.

Cowslips and clover
Whisper her thought;
Prized ten times over
For what they brought.
Truly I love her;
Surely I ought!

SLEEP WELL

GOOD-NIGHT! And when the drowsiness
Is drifting into sleep;
When cheek and brow the pillow press,
And breath comes long and deep;
When darkness holds you in its arms,
Secure from prying light,
Then comes the tender dream that charms.
Sleep well, Sweetheart,— Good-night.

TRYSTING TIME

THE sun is up ; the sky is blue ;
The world is on its way ;
And only waits a sight of you
To know a perfect day.
The leaves are laughing in the wind,
The birds sing merrily ;
So, dearest dear, be not unkind,
But come along with me.

There is a little path we know,
Half sunshine and half shade,
Where red the checker-berries grow
And fairy-rings are made.
There out of sight and with no fear
Of listeners, we may be,
So, sweetest sweet, if you would hear —
Just come along with me.

MY SONG

I PLAYED on a pipe that was borrowed
From one who had laid it aside;
I sang of the hearts that had sorrowed,
Of those who had loved and had died.

But no one gave heed to my playing,
And none would lend ear to my song,
For I sang what all had been saying,
And played the old tunes overlong.

So I'll cut me a reed from the sedges,
That, rocked by the wind, strong has grown,
And there, where no memory hedges,
I'll sing me a song of my own.

LOVE ASLEEP

LITTLE Love is fast asleep —
 Kisses tired, and laughter too.
Little maiden, do not weep,
Let Love's slumbering be deep;
 He will wake to joy anew,
 He will wake to smile on you.
 Let Love rest awhile.

See, his cheek is rosy red,
 Listen to his breathing low;
Do not fear that Love is dead,
Pillow on your breast his head;
 Be content that he can know
 Dreams of none but you; and so
 Let Love sleep awhile.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS, dear, you and I,
Before God bids us die,
Out of his goodness, may
Live one long, perfect day
Together — you and I.

Perhaps, love, you and I,
In some strange by-and-by,
May know a better rest
For waiting, and be blest
Together ; you and I.

THE ANSWER

“GOOD-NIGHT!” You are too far away
To hear the words I whisper low,
And yet whatever I shall say
It seems that you must know.

For every loving, tender thought
That bade your heart less lonely be,
Had missed its mission had it brought
No message back to me.

“Good-night!” My whisper brings you
near,
I almost hold you in my sight,
And, in the silence, I can hear
Your answering “Good-night!”

HEARTSEASE

THERE never now shall come to me
A little child to still
The mother-longing that must be
Without responsive thrill.

I may not whisper, dear, to you
The secret that I would,
Though it is sweet to feel it true
That you have understood.

But from my heart you now shall hear
Why still my lips have smiled:
This lack has made you doubly dear,
My husband — and my child.

GOOD WISHES

I COUNT not what may come to you
Of others' praise or scorning,
From me you have this greeting true —
“ Good-morning ! ”

I know not what the hours have brought,
Of loss or gain, yet I will say,
In passing, with a hopeful thought,
“ Good-day ! ”

I cannot tell what may await
You next of joy or sorrow,
But I will bid you, parting late,
“ Good-morrow ! ”

I may not guess what sleep may bring
Of restless dreams or visions bright,
Still wish you now a comforting
“ Good-night ! ”

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

Written on a photograph of the colored poet

As on the darkest face of night
 Shall blush the wooing of the morn;
As God's eternal stars of light
 An ebon background do not scorn;
As both the dawn and starlight are,
 Contrasted with the shadow, far
More wonderful and bright,
So what is shining on this face,
 Across its darkness surely brings
A morning-promise, for a race,
 A harbinger of brighter things.
Wake, hope! The morn is in the sky;
Wake, hearts! The night is passing by;
 Dunbar still lives, and sings!

THE LAND O' DREAMS

WHEN from the day of toil we're free
And dull the tired world seems,
Then take my hand and come with me
Into the Land o' Dreams.

And as the rose-cloud lifts to show
Its beauties to our eyes,
Then, side by side, we too shall know
The poet's paradise.

We shall set foot upon the way
That leads up to the height
Where we may stand, at dawn of day,
Bathed in the magic light.

To see the mysteries unfold,
Undreamed of until now ;
To learn of wonders yet untold,
That earth can never show.

Where, high above the nesting crag,
The great war-eagle flies,
And giant fingers strive to drag
The dawn-mist from the skies ;

Where, far below, the valley-land
Still in the shadow sleeps,
Unmindful of the shining band
That down the mountain sweeps ;

To show us that whate'er we seek
It lies our path along —
The calm contentment of the weak,
The struggle of the strong;

To tell us that though steep the way
And ever rougher so,
There is a longer, brighter day
The higher up we go.

And though we may not always dwell —
Not yet — in wonderland,
The road to it we know full well,
For we can understand.

And every time we journey there,
The task more easy seems
To bring a store of treasures rare
Back from the Land o' Dreams.

HER HANDS

YOUR hands — they are still mine to hold,
 To caress;
So slender that I can enfold
 And may press
Them in mine to the heart that you know, dear.

Your hands, as they rest on the keys,
 Seem to bless
Sound itself in the old melodies,
 None the less
Are they sweet because heard long ago, dear.

Your hands are not shapely and white,
 I confess;
Yet beautiful hands in my sight,
 For I guess
How labors of love made them so, dear.

Your hands — I can see them touch now
 A stray tress
Of the hair that lies gray on your brow.
 Loveliness
Lies too where the little lines show, dear.

Your hands — they are still mine to hold,
 To caress;
No jewels — just a plain band of gold —
 For their dress;
But the hands of my Lady, I vow, dear!

AN OLD LOVE SONG

I WONDER what was in it
That its note could touch me so ;
A tune upon a spinet,
Sounding from the long-ago.
And the strangest thing about it
Was that no one on it played,
For the melody, without it,
Rang to words that softly said,

*“ I love thee! And thou askest why?
Ask of the stars above thee.
They know, perhaps, the reason; I —
I only know I love thee! ”*

Then, it seemed, a hand, so slender,
Rested on the yellowed keys,
As the music grew more tender,
Like a wreath of melodies ;
And the spirit-voice kept ringing
Till the tears were in my eyes,
For a singer, dead, was singing
Of the love that never dies.

'Twas the echo of a passion
Heard a hundred years away ;
Though the spinet's out of fashion,
Yet the theme is new to-day,

For the tender words endear it
To our hearts in accents low,
And the world will love to hear it
Still, a hundred years from now.

*“ I love thee! And thou askest why?
Ask of the stars above thee.
They know, perhaps, the reason; I —
I only know I love thee! ”*

THE RETURN FROM THE TRENCHES

Argonne, 1915

“BR-R-RUM! Br-r-rum!” The soldiers come
With ragged step to beat of drum.
The folk run out, with cheer and shout,
And dogs and children run about.
“Br-r-rum! Br-r-rum!” The soldiers come,
But from their ranks are missing some.

“Dead! Dead!” No word is said,
We hear it in the broken tread.
A victory was gained, but see
Where those are weeping silently.
“Dead! Dead!” No word is said
As lips go pale and eyes grow red.

“On! On!” To-day is one;
To-morrow finds the task undone.
To starve and strive in bloody drive
Is still the work for those alive.
“On! On!” Or sire or son,
The dead man is the lucky one!

“Br-r-rum! Br-r-rum!” The last have come,
And faintly beats the distant drum.
The clattering feet forsake the street,
But still the echoing walls repeat
“*Br-r-rum! Br-r-rum!*” The dead have come,
And march in to the ghostly drum!

HOPE-SONG

ON many another page I've sung
A song of yesterday,
On themes that I have found among
Sad thoughts long hid away.

Now I will sooner sing the song
That has no note of sorrow,
No vain regret, no sense of wrong —
The hope-song of to-morrow.

HOSPITALITY

LITTLE Love just came my way —
 Bleak the March wind blows.
Why he chose a chilly day
 Goodness only knows.

But my heart was open wide —
 Tell the tale once more;
Little Love just came inside
 To warm — and closed the door!

AVE, CÆSAR!

THERE's a voice that never shall be stilled
By the silence of the sword,
That cries of pledges unfulfilled —
An empire's broken word.

There is a darkness on the sky,
Where smokes from homesteads roll
Across the sun; that, drifting by,
Leaves a shadow on your soul!

There is a sight that shall remain
Through all that you contemn,
For reddened hands have touched, to stain,
An imperial diadem.

And, as time takes the final toll,
The record will go down —
A broken pledge; a shadowed soul;
A triple-tarnished crown!

IN APPLE TIME

YOUR gift is something that I can
With fond assurance grapple,
Though trouble, when this world began,
Commenced just with an apple!

But you have turned the thing around,
For your dear self first taught me
How I, by love, was firmly bound
Ere you the apple brought me.

Its cheek is smooth, with rosy flush
Just where the sun shone on it,
As I have seen the brighter blush
Seek yours, and rest upon it.

And while the perfume seems to be
Its own, it would have missed it,
But that, before you gave it me,
Your sweeter lips had kissed it.

And so it breathes a message clear;
You may be sure I heed it,
For I am writing to you here
My answer. Can you read it?

MISUNDERSTANDING

It was a tiny cloud that swept
 Across the smiling summer sky ;
That soon was gone, and sunshine swept
 The shadow of its drifting by.

It brought no storm ; it gave no rain ;
 And yet it left this doubt with me —
The cloud that was may come again,
 And longer in its passing be.

A WHITE CHRISTMAS

*Pile the snow beside the path;
Break the drift upon the track;
Heart of joy for him who hath,
Heart of hope for those who lack.*

Christmas-eve the snow-cloud lifted
And the moon was shining down
On the stretches deeply drifted,
On the white roofs of the town,
Where were houses bright and cheery,
Where were houses dark and cold,
Happy homes and shelters dreary;
Gay and sad the stories told.
Here the little children, sleeping,
Dream of wonders they believe;
There are put to bed for keeping
Half-way warm on Christmas eve.

Christmas morn the bells are ringing
On the crisp air, loud and clear;
They are crying, they are singing,
That depends on those who hear.
There the children well are faring,
Yule-tide joys have come again;
Here the little faces staring
At the frosted window-pane.

There a gentle face is glowing;
Here another, gray and worn.
Mother-hearts fill to o'erflowing,
Glad or sad on Christmas morn.

*Heap the snow along the road;
Break the drifts with plow and sleigh;
Passage for the creaking load!
None shall lack on Christmas Day!*

WHITHER AWAY, SUMMER?

THERE'S a chill in the kiss of the night,
And a mist in the dawn of the day;
There's a sigh for the soon fading light —
Whither away, Summer?
Whither away?

There's a haze on the uttermost hill,
And a sough where the maple-trees sway;
There's a sob in the wind, calling still,
“ Whither away, Summer?
Whither away? ”

FOREVERMORE

THE hopes that were so fair and bright,
Are withered all, and dead;
And only echoes come to-night
Of words that once were said.
I cannot sing; my note is stilled;
The voices that my soul once thrilled,
Are hushed forevermore.

Beloved children of my brain,
The fondest friends I knew,
You've left me now, and all in vain
I call and call for you.
You will not come to me, alone;
I drove you hence, and you are gone
For me forevermore.

Yet from the mould of flowers' decay
Still fairer blossoms spring,
And for my buried hopes there may
Be an awakening.
Nothing that is can ever die;
And these may blossom, by-and-by,
To bloom forevermore.
Forevermore!

DONNER'S DREAM

'Twas in the olden time. All that long night
Erasmus Donner waked, until the oil
Was low beneath the lamp's expiring light
That told of many hours of tiring toil;
Until the window's gloom was turning gray,
And chill the night grew, waiting for the day.

Then as an arrowy glance of ruddy light
Flashed through the casement's lozenged
pane, it fell
Upon the shining mystery that, bright,
Was dripping from the rosy crucible;
And when the drops in final count were told
The crystal jar seemed filled with liquid gold.

The weariness of waiting was no more.
Then, as the coming day upon him crept,
With that bright phial on the ledge before
His heavy eyes, Erasmus Donner slept.
The long, long nights of secret search were
past,
And Life's Elixir he had found, at last.

Then, as he slept, it was as if he dreamed.
He stood within a squalid room, so bare
And comfortless that such a dread spot seemed
A place for every soul to flee; but there,

Beside a heap of rags, on which there lay
A sottish woman, was a child — at play.

And still he dreamed.

Before his fancy's eyes
A curtain lifted, and he saw within
A chamber hung with scarlet canopies,
A shrine where youth might learn to worship
sin;
A pleasure place, where life might seem to be
One long continued dream of revelry.

And still he dreamed.

He saw a lonely wood
Through which a pathway wound. Beside
the way
There was a strange, repellent pool of blood,
And half within its horrid bound there lay
A youth whose stiffening fingers clutched the
breast
From which the last dark drops were slowly
prest.

And still he dreamed.

He saw how all the day
A woman toiled to earn a blow at night;
He saw a weeping maiden torn away
From love and hope by wealth's more power-
ful might;

He saw the few rise high above the rest —
Each step they mounted was a human breast.

He saw a brother mourn a sister's shame;
He saw a mother weep a wayward son;
He heard a daughter curse a father's name;
He saw the right so oft by wrong undone,
That, in his very dream, aloud he cried,
“If that be life, how blessed to have died!”

The sun shot high. Erasmus Donner woke,
And started to his feet in dazed surprise.
“Can that be life?” were the first words he
spoke;
And, speaking thus, the phial met his eyes.
“’Tis Life's Elixir!” In a moment more
The crystal jar lay, shattered, on the floor.

Then, as the golden sunlight brighter streamed,
Upon his bended knees Erasmus Donner
prayed:
“O God! If life can be what I have dreamed,
Accursed is the draught that I have made.
Let me but learn one life, that, dying, I
May teach men how to live, and how to die!”

DUST OF ROSES

WEARY-LIKE they come, and slow
The feet that danced a while ago.
Lips that laughed are drooped, and sigh
For kisses of the days gone by,
And those sad, regretful eyes
Hold no more than memories,
Must hold these, like pictures seen
On some brightly lighted screen,
While the darkness, all around,
Only seems the more profound.
Who are these who sit and stare
At the phantom pageant there,
They are those whose feet were light,
Lips were red, and eyes were bright;
Those who played with love, and thought
But of what the moment brought,
Till they had forgotten how
To build, to hope, to dream; and now
They shall sit before the screen
Seeing only what has been;
Till on memory's field of sight
Time shall throw a last "Good-night!"

THE TEAR

THE sculptor had labored a month and a day
To mould, with skilful hands,
The form of a god from the yielding clay,
That still unfinished stands.

The figure is perfect, each curve and line
Of wondrous strength and grace,
But the head is mortal, the look divine
Is not upon the face.

And the artist knows that his work is naught
But a thing of common clay;
That 'twas only Talent who with him wrought,
While Genius stayed away.

Twin sisters are these; so alike from birth
That man can seldom tell
Which is the one who lives upon earth,
Which with the gods doth dwell.

And the sculptor sees, and he sorrows much,
For the lack is plain and real;
It needs some subtle, some dreamed of touch,
To make the face ideal.

Then the woman who loves him draws tenderly
 near,
 With a kiss, and bends above
His work, and there falls on the face a tear —
 A tear from the eyes of love.

And the sculptor brushes it quick away,
 Too sweet for such a place;
And his gentle touch on the yielding clay
 Changes the modeled face.

And the sculptor sees, with a fond surprise,
 The sought expression shine —
For a tear of love from a woman's eyes
 Has made the clay divine.

FRIENDSHIP

REACH your hand to me, my friend,
 Across that separating space;
To hear your voice I may pretend,
 And fancy that I see your face,
And feel your kindly grasp meet mine
Across the dim dividing line.

Sometimes in the weary fight
 I can seem to feel your touch —
Hopeful, helping, guiding right —
 A gentle force that means so much.
Across our lives' dividing line
Your hand is surely clasping mine.

AN OLD STORY

WHEN Jack and Jill were young, you see,
They met when hearts were mellow ;
He saw that she was pretty ; she
Thought him a handsome fellow.

Then stroll, and talk, and moonlight night
Were quite enough to book him ;
His draft on love was drawn at sight,
Face value how she took him.

So they were wed ; and settled down
To learn about each other ;
And found the one that each had known
In fact was quite another !

Then business so engrossed him that
At last he simply boarded
At home, and gave his time to what
She left of all he hoarded.

For she was fond of gaiety
(In proper moderation)
And seemed to think that life should be
Perpetual vacation.

His nature, somehow, never lent
Itself to what she cared for,
As she had lots of temperament
Which he was ill prepared for.

The tale is common. You can find
A hundred more its equal;
So you will quickly call to mind
The inevitable sequel.

And yet, perhaps, some moonlight night,
Each feels a trifle lonely,
For thoughts will come of what life might
Have really been, if only —!

THE REVENGE OF THE FLOWERS

Suggested by a painting—"Die Blumen-Rache"

THE dance is done ; the hours have run
 Away in merry measure,
For happiest things have swiftest wings
 To bring an end to pleasure.

The lights are out ; the guests have gone,
 The birthday-ball is over ;
The daughter of the house, alone,
 Lies dreaming of her lover.

She sleeps. Her bosom gently swells ;
 The rosy lips are parted ;
The ring upon her finger tells
 Whose kiss those blushes started.

The counterpane has slipped away
 And, charmed, the moonbeams hover.
Sweet innocence ! What star shall say
 What grace it may discover ?

The snowy linen feels the thrill
 Of each heart-beat ;
The dimpled knees are crossed ; and still
 The weary feet.
Steal in, chill, chaste moonlight !
She sleeps — pass on, O night !

.

Beside her bed, upon a stand
Of wood, inlaid with many a band
Of silver, is a vase of flowers ;
Exotics of a strange perfume
By careful nursing coaxed to bloom
In this far land of ours.
Betrothal flowers her lover gave ;
Fit for a bridal — or a grave.

O lover ! didst thou never hear
That even flowers have souls, and fear
To rudely pluck them?
Never? Ah, then thou knewest less
Than butterfly that doth caress,
Or bees that suck them.
But thou shalt learn the truth, and she
Thou lovest, in death shall teach it thee.

Now from every blossom springs
A sprite on wings !
Strange fairy-creatures seem to come
From every calyx, and the room
Grows heavy with the odors of the South.
The Spirits of the Flowers are everywhere ;
They hover near her in the heavy air ;
They kiss her forehead, eyes, and mouth.
“ Revenge ! ” they whisper as her lips grow
pale ;
“ Revenge ! ” they whisper as her cheeks go
white ;

The moonbeams haste away in fright,
And from the sky the misty veil
 Is drawn away,
 And breaks the day.

.

And when they come to dress her she is dead.
The flowers are withered. From that bed
 They lift her but to shrieve her.
Open the window ; but the morning air,
Though it may fan her brow and stir her hair,
 Cannot revive her.
The loving heart has ceased to beat ;
Forever still the little feet.
The flowers' revenge is none the less complete
 That they are lifeless there.

IN GOD'S ACRE

WE walk together, side by side,
We feel the touch of hands;
We gaze across the star-sea wide,
And dream of mist-hid lands.

They leave us, and we mourn. But why?
If we had only known,
The day we thought it was "Good-by!"
They were, at last, our own.

MARGERY IN THE COUNTRY

SONG for a little lady
 Beneath the apple tree,
A bower cool and shady
 For one so fair as she.

The blossoms spend their sweetness —
 She takes it for her own ;
The morning gains completeness
 Since her bright face was shown.

A sunbeam, caught in straying
 Through branch and blossom there,
Sweet penalty is paying
 Imprisoned in her hair.

She laughs ; the robin pauses
 In morning-song to hear,
Pretending that the cause is
 A thing a bird might fear.

The squirrel, on the fence, that
 His racing home has stayed,
Sits still, with no pretense that
 Her voice makes him afraid.

Though by the years I'm parted
 From all that lies along
The path her feet have started
 I still may sing this song.

To innocence and beauty
Each man must bend the knee,
As I, in loving duty,
To Lady Margery.

QUATRAINS

LOVE'S MAGIC

TIME touched her lightly, leaving but a trace ;
Care gave her lips that softness when they
speak ;
Now love has wrought a marvel on her face,
And youth returns, once more to kiss her
cheek.

THE TURN OF THE WHEEL

I LAUGHED at Life ; my wealth of days I threw
Upon the game, and lost them heedlessly ;
Now, when with trembling hands I hoard the
few
That still I count as mine, Life laughs at me.

ASPIRATION

WHY should I write of doubt and dead desire,
Seeking a stream where turbid waters run ?
I'll light my altar from dawn's rosy fire
And strive to be a singer in the sun.

THE NIGHT

A SLEEPLESS, memory-haunted night,
Each counted hour seemed doubly long ;
Then through the darkness shone a light,
And from the silence came a song.

THE TEMPTERS

“HE was his own worst enemy!”

Thus our companion's story ends.
We shift the blame; the truth is, we
Were his worst enemies — his friends.

HOPE

DARKNESS, and haunting fear to miss the way,
And always heavier the load,
Till, with the coming of despair, the day
Breaks through the night, and shows the
road.

EXPERIENCE

THE love you wakened was life's leaven,
And then the death of yours befell;
Our meeting was a proof of Heaven,
Our parting taught belief in Hell.

THREE ARE COMPANY

A LITTLE room; a cushioned seat;
A shaded half-light from above;
A curtained door; a silence sweet,
And we three — you and I, and Love!

UNFULFILLED

I SENT my thoughts, like bees awing,
Life's hidden sweetness gathering;
Then turned away for wealth to strive,
Nor guessed that thus I closed the hive.

THE POOL

FORGIVE me, that I dared to look;
Believe me that I did not see:
The sunlight spun, from bough to brook,
A golden veil twixt you and me! ,

THE LIE

HE told it once, but no one heard;
Twice, and a few received it;
Three times, and more caught up the word;
The fourth time some believed it.

FEBRUARY'S GARDEN

ALONG the road, where drifts lie deep
And creaks the sledge with sullen load,
The wayside garden lies asleep
Till Spring shall pass along the road.

GOSSIP

'Twas born in malice; and, forsooth,
It throve on spite, and would not die;
The truth — that was but half a truth,
The lie — that was not all a lie.

VALE!

THE passing-bell tolls loud and deep
As Midas' body's laid away;
Pity he's dead, and cannot weep —
They bury his best friend to-day!

THE CALL

A LITTLE song was in my heart;
I did not guess its presence there.
You called; and from my lips, apart,
'Twas born upon the happy air.

PARTING

I FEEL your kiss upon my cheek,
Cold as a flake of snow, as light;
That, at the formal words you speak,
Leaves nothing but a tear to-night.

DREAMS

SWEETHEART, will you dream with me?
If so, then your dreams shall be
Of yourself, because —'tis true —
All my dreams are just of you!

COINCIDENCE

I WROTE a line that seemed to be
The best one ever penned by me;
Till on a page I chanced to look —
My thought was printed in the book!

B. C. AND A. D.

IN olden days cold marble woke
To life at words till then unknown.
Alas! how changed! Of love I spoke,
And straight my goddess turned to stone!





WENT COOK BINDING
JAN 1989
Grantville, PA

